

Transcript: Cover Letter

Chapman Learning Commons



Introduction: What is a Cover Letter?

Yanya: Oh my god, I just got another rejection letter from one of the jobs that I applied for.

Thao: Oh...

Yanya: I don't know what it is I am doing wrong, I am fed up with all these rejections. Do you mind going over my applications? Just in case I am missing something?

Thao: Yeah, absolutely.

Oh, I noticed you haven't been including a cover letter with your job application?

Yanya: A cover letter? What's that?

Thao: So basically a cover letter is a one-page letter that can help show the employer why I am a good fit for the company. I usually submit it with my resume or CV to help me stand out.

Yanya: So how do I get started on that?

Thao: Yeah, just let me show you mine.

Cover Letter Format:

So, this is the format that I follow for my cover letter. For consistency, I like to match my cover letter's header to the resume's header and use this style of spacing so it's easy to read.

I include the Hiring manager's name if it is mentioned in the job posting. I think this helps to make the cover letter a little more personal. However, if I don't know their name, I tend to stick with "Dear Hiring Manager."

I like to use the opening paragraph as a way to express my interest in the position and let the employer know a little bit more about myself.

I usually start the paragraph with a hook, a personal story, or an anecdote. So, in my current cover letter, I wrote about why I'm interested in my major. You can talk about whatever you think is important to share with the employers.

For the rest of the paragraph, I focus on explaining why I want the position. I usually talk about the skills that I want to grow in this position, how it helps me achieve my career goals, or how the role aligns with my interests.

I like to use the middle paragraph to demonstrate why I think I am a good fit for the job. I usually pick 2 to 3 key strengths and provide examples from past experiences

For example, the last job I applied for required teamwork skills so I talked about my time working as a barista where I would have to deal with the peak hour rush and communicate efficiently with my coworkers.

For the closing paragraph, I summarize my skills and interests. Thank the employer for their time and consideration and invite them to follow up with me about the next step.

Mistakes to avoid and general tips:

I always carefully proofread before submitting my cover letter, just to make sure that I haven't made any grammatical errors or typos.

Instead of just using common phrases like "I think I am a perfect fit" or "I am a team player", I like to provide an example that connects my skills to the job requirements. For example, when I talked about my time as a barista earlier!

I try to make sure that the font, font size and overall formatting of my cover letter is consistent with my resume. It's a nice touch that shows my attention to detail and that I've put time and thought into my application.

Not sure where to start? I always look at my resume and re-work my accomplishment statements into complete sentences for my cover letter.

So for my last cover letter, instead of just mentioning, "Worked with 2 other people on a project" I like to elaborate by mentioning the skills I developed and how I did so. I described the planning stage where conflicts arose and how we resolved them as a team.

Even if the job posting doesn't mention submitting a cover letter, I still submit it regardless.

I like to use the job posting as a kind of checklist. I try to make sure the keywords mentioned in the requirements, like communication skills or leading a team, are addressed with examples in my cover letter.

Conclusion: The Importance of a Cover Letter

Yanya: Oh okay, I didn't realize I was missing out on a major part of the application process.

Thao: Yeah, cover letters are super important. It gives us a chance to go beyond the resume and provide the hiring manager with insight into who we are and we can give a more in-depth perspective of our skills and experience and why we are interested in this particular role.

Yanya: Thank you for your help! I'm gonna get started on my cover letter right now.

Thao: No worries, let me know if you have any other questions!